



# PUNCH



## OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI

Vol. CXCIX No. 5200

November 13 1940

### Charivaria

"My superior Air Force will smash Britain's gate," asserts GOERING. None the less our PORTAL is unmoved.

ROOSEVELT's victory caused gloom in Germany, although it was explained in high Nazi circles that he only got in as the result of an old-fashioned democratic election.

"Can a hare really jump as high as a horse?" asks a correspondent in an evening paper. It depends, we suppose, on how high the horse is.

"What makes people go abroad to study singing?" asks a correspondent. In some cases the law of self-preservation.



"Santa Claus will be here this year as usual," says a writer. Many children, we understand, have already volunteered to act as roof-spotters.

On his recent visit to Madrid, Gestapo Chief Herr HIMMLER saw a bull-fight. It isn't often a German gets a chance to see such a large piece of beef nowadays.



Sailors helped to repair the pavement in a coastal town after a bomb explosion. Jack tars.

**Mixed Bag**  
"Another was brought down in an engagement over an Essex town just before duck."—Daily Paper.

A French farmhand arrested by the Gestapo was allowed to go free on giving an officer a basket of potatoes. Justice was tempered with Murphys.

Herr VON RIBBENTROP was reported to be in so many different places a fortnight ago that he looked more like a procession than a Foreign Minister.

Neutrals recall that September 15th was the date decided on by HITLER for the invasion of this country. Apparently he has not yet decided on the year.

"The popular leader-writer thinks the thoughts of his readers," mentions a newspaperman. About twenty-four hours, shall we say, before his readers think of them first.

#### Warning Thought

THAT is the fourth warning  
This morning—  
I do hope the siren  
Won't find it tiren.

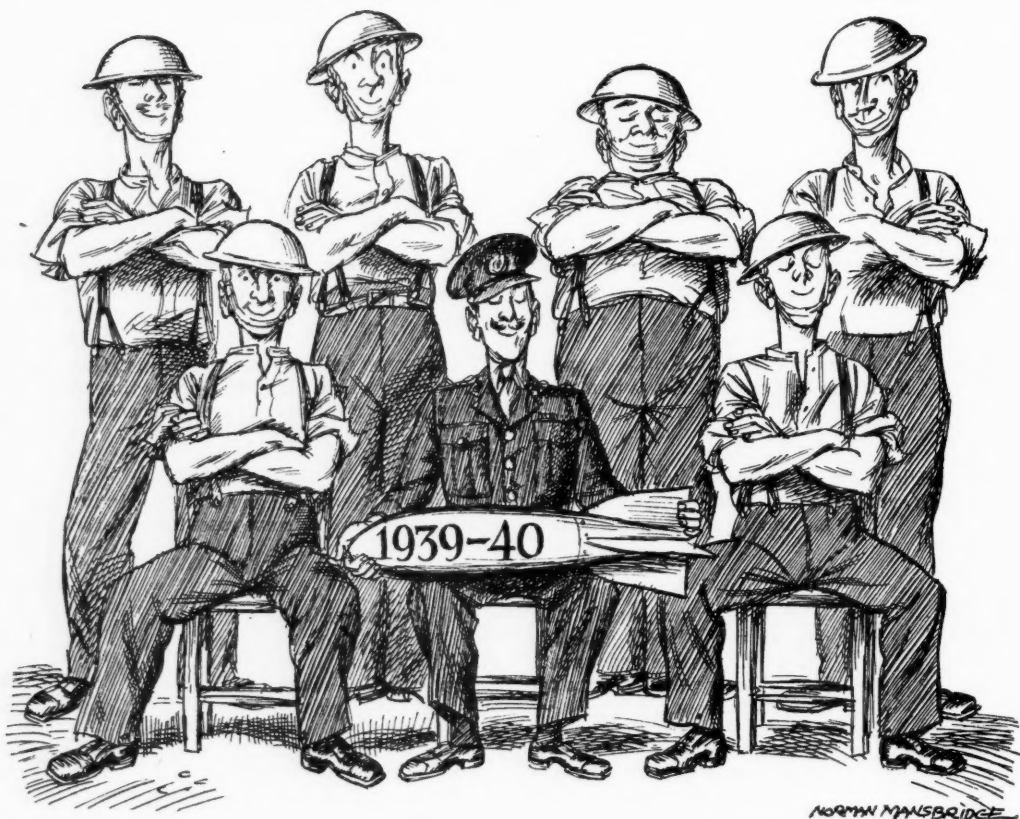


A Londoner says that owing to a building being demolished by a bomb he can now see two public statues from the windows of his flat. We can only suggest that he keeps the blinds drawn.

#### New Job for Goering?

"The impression is being spread in Berlin that further Franco-German negotiations will take place shortly, and that meanwhile the greatest secretary is essential."—Daily Paper.

The same year, we read, saw the birth of ADOLF HITLER and CHARLIE CHAPLIN. As time went on the former grew less funny.



NORMAN MANSBRIDGE

### Military Objectives

AND still I wear it on my chain,  
The latch-key of my humble  
cot;  
Pardon the tear I can't restrain,  
Forgive, I beg, that random blot.

Out of the night a black Hun flew  
Filled with a wild destructive lust  
And indiscriminately blew  
My lowly tenement to dust.

There is no roof, no door, no wall;  
This unimposing front-door key  
Out of the shattered wreck is all  
That now remains to mine and me.

But, as I've said, I keep it yet  
And will do till my course is run  
Lest for one hour I might forget  
The curse I heaped upon that Hun.

A noble curse, and fine and large;  
I doubt, since man was first begat,  
If e'en a lifetime on a barge  
Has ripened such a curse as that.

I cursed him on his bed at night,  
I cursed him on his getting up;  
He will not take a pleasant bite  
Henceforward, or a decent sup.

I doomed him to a bloated curve  
Beneath a chest that daily shrinks;  
I dealt with his sciatic nerve  
In a most thorough way, methinks.

I have condemned his bones to  
break,  
His joints to lose their pliant oils,  
I muse on how those teeth will ache  
All, and his lifelong spread of  
boils.

His bosom's wife will shortly slope  
Unless her nauseous looks forbid,  
Which, I arranged, would give full  
scope

For nagging, till he'll wish she did.

And he'll encounter foul disgrace  
And rue the day when he was born;

Where'er 'tis seen his hideous face  
Shall be a pointing and a scorn.

Much I could add, but must be brief  
(His homes of course will fall down  
flat;  
Here I can only give the chief  
Items, and you'll have jumped to  
that).

Moreover, to provide for flaws  
And to insure 'gainst any doubt,  
I entered an inclusive clause  
To cover aught that I'd left out.

Yes, that fell Hun has done his worst;  
I have no wall, no roof, no door,  
But when I think of the Accursed  
I hold that I'm the one to score.

And, if disposed to peak and pine,  
I resurrect by this small key  
That devastating curse of mine,  
And, oh, the difference to me!

DUM-DUM.

## Boots, Army

**G**UNNER BLUITT wants another pair of boots, you can see that at a glance. The pair he wears are all right, but the spare pair he sets out modestly for inspection (one to the left of his blankets and one to the right) are in a desperate state; one only hopes that they have long ceased to feel any pain. So with the desperate efficiency and overwhelming ignorance of the newly-pipped I wrote a chit, terse and to the point, and told the Station Clerk to bung it over to Battery. It said:

"Please supply one pr boots for Gnr Bluitt."

The Station Clerk took it, read it, turned it over, held it up to the light, possibly for watermarks, and said it wouldn't do. It wasn't, he said, if he might venture to make a remark, the way boots were indented for in the Army.

"Indented for?" I said, going pale.

The Station Clerk explained. There was a right way of indenting for boots, he said, and a wrong way, and this, if he might go so far as to pass an observation, fell emphatically into the second class. Did I wish him to draft it out for me?

I said no. The point is that you have got to take a firm hand with these fellows or they will run you completely. You've got to assert yourself, and the sooner the better. So I said, "Just give me one or two sample indents from the file," and I added "At once" so sharply that a small gunner sorting letters in a corner sprang to attention and saluted.

"Stand at ease," I said, flushing.

"I beg your pardon, Sir?" said the Station Clerk.

"Not you," I said. "I was speaking to the man over there."

"That's Gibson, Sir," said the Clerk. "Do you want him, Sir?"

"No, I don't," I said shortly. "I simply stood him at ease."

"I see, Sir," said the Clerk, but I knew he thought I was mad.

I took the samples that the Clerk gave me from the files and was just entering the inner office, or sanctum, when I noticed that the gunner was still standing properly at ease, hands behind the back and left foot carried off some fifteen inches from the right. I couldn't very well leave him like that, so I said "Stand easy."

"Sir?" said the Clerk.

"Oh, you shut up," I said, and slammed the door.

When I had had a go at those extracts from the files I began to see that my chit wouldn't do at all. It was too short. In fact it was so short that it seemed somehow offensive, if not downright insolent. So I tried again and this time I wrote:

### SUBJECT: BOOTS

1. *Personnel requiring boots:* 0144623 Gunner Bluitt, Joseph.

2. *Reason above-mentioned personnel requires boots:* Present pair worn out.

3. *Evidence that present boots require replacement:* (a) While proceeding on my rounds on Monday last, 28/10/40, in the execution of my duty as Orderly Officer, I inspected the boots of the above-mentioned personnel and found them to be unfit for service. The boots were disorderly but not drunk. (b) The above-mentioned personnel has given evidence that the boots are tore clean out.

4. *Condition of boots:* Not good. In the case of the right boot, hereafter referred to as Boot, Right, contact

between sole and uppers has been lost. There is also an open wound or gash on the cap, toe, and two cicatrices above the instep. This boot is definitely unserviceable. In the case of Boot, Left, this boot is almost entirely missing, though it is still possible to see where it used to be. In my opinion this boot could not be repaired.

5. *Full statement of requirements:* One pair boots.

When I had got as far as this the thought flashed across my mind that in the position of "Stand easy," though the head and eyes may be turned and the hands freely raised and lowered, the feet may not be moved. I had this small gunner on my conscience. I did not care to think of him rooted so lengthily to one spot, with his letters still unsorted all around him. It seemed to me that the only thing I could do was to fall him out.

"Fall out," I shouted.

There was no sound from the outer office so I shouted again "FALL OUT," drawing out the first or cautionary word and putting plenty of snap into the "OUT."

The Station Clerk opened the door.

"Did you call me, Sir?" he asked.

"No," I said. "I want that man to fall out."

"Fall out, Sir?" said the Clerk.

"Yes," I said.

"There's nobody here," said the Clerk.

"All right then," I said. "Don't trouble." Honestly I don't see what else I could have said.

After this I handed over my memo to the Clerk, who read it through and seemed pleased. He was a little bothered by Para. 5, I could see that. He would have liked more detail there. But, probably because he believes in training young officers gradually, he let it pass and got to work with his typewriter.

\* \* \* \* \*

Next evening I had a phone call from the Lieutenant-Quartermaster. "Look here," he said, "when you want a pair of boots, just ring up or send a chit. Don't bother with all that tripe you wrote out yesterday. We've no time for it here."

"One moment," I said, "by a chit do you mean something like 'Please supply one pair boots for Gunner Bluitt?'"

"That's it," he said. "That's all you need."

"Thanks," I said faintly. "May I fall out?"

H. F. E.

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## London Chimes

**S**PITFIRES and Blenheims,  
Said the bells of St. Clement's,  
Aren't built for five farthings,  
Said the bells of St. Martin's.  
Donations, I pray ye,  
Said the bells of Old Bailey,  
On account o' the Blitz,  
Said the bells of Shoreditch.  
Downhearted? Not we!  
Said the bells of Stepney;  
Lor' love yer, no, no,  
Boomed the big bell of Bow.

## Some Material Damage

**I** HATE—I have always hated—the habit which certain writers seem to cultivate of exposing their private grievances to a public which impatiently turns on to the next page. Yet it does seem to me that there is such a thing as civilized and such a thing as barbarian warfare; as playing cricket and not playing cricket; as fighting like a gentleman of the old school (whether the coloured tie is worn or not), and hitting foully and suddenly below the belt.

Even so I would not speak of the matter at all if it were not that my own personal friends have been so grossly unsympathetic when I have told them quietly and, I hope, courageously what I have had to suffer.

"You can wear a kilt," said one of them, knowing well that if I were to appear at my office in a kilt it would only provoke ribaldry and unseemly amusement besides annoying those of my colleagues who are entitled and indeed accustomed to work in the distinctive clothing of the Highland septs.

"Send the whole story to Robertson Hare," said another, "and he can make a play out of it. It's the only way he hasn't lost them yet." "The Greeks don't wear them," said a third, "and they're fighting the Wops like—" "Like Trojans, I suppose you were going to say," I answered maliciously. A fourth friend told me that it would teach me not to indulge in personal extravagance during the greatest crisis of our national history. And another man, not a friend but a mere acquaintance to whom I recounted the whole incident on a bus, remarked that in a London winter it didn't much matter what one wore anyway as hardly anybody noticed it.

It matters to me. I had made my selection very carefully and after a good deal of anxious thought, and more than anything which has happened during the last fortnight the incident has shaken, though it has not, I am glad to say, shattered, my morale. I am referring of course to the letter which I received from my tailor about a fortnight ago and from which I quote the more important and significant paragraphs:

*"No doubt you are wondering what has happened to your order for two suits. I had them well in hand last week and the*

*coats and waistcoats are ready for fitting, but the two pairs of trousers are somewhere in a heap of rubble, the remains of my trouser-makers' workshop. . . . The workman and his two helpers escaped by a miracle. . . . Part of my trouble is that there is not enough material now available for another pair of trousers for either of the suits. . . ."*

More detail was added, but enough has been cited, I think, to indicate the magnitude of the calamity. The magnitude and, I may also say, the unexpectedness.

It was a thing that had never happened to me before, a disappointment which in my most timorous imaginings I had never anticipated. In the whole of my life, even in all the troubles which happened between the years 1914 and 1918, any clothing of mine, military or civilian, which may have perished had been either worn or part-worn. For a time at least I had possessed it. No new trousers had ever been dangled in front of me like the fruit of Tantalus and then removed before my eager hands had clutched them. The fact that the coats and waistcoats had been unscathed during the catastrophe seemed only to make the wanton and ruthless destruction brought upon the world by the maniacs of Berlin more senseless than ever. My choice, as I said before, had been made slowly and deliberately. I had examined every pattern in every *genre* that my tailor possessed, and the final decision had appeared, when I made it, not only irrevocable but inspired. It was only with a sick heart that I could contemplate taking up the struggle anew and with a feeling that some irreparable damage had been done—albeit in a small way—to the whole fabric of our civilization.

Philosophy (whether it were that of Carlyle or another) ought no doubt to have rallied to my aid and consoled me in my annoyance. "It is possible" (Philosophy might have murmured in my ear) "to select other suits which you will grow to think you like better than those you have forgone . . ." "Many a man" (Philosophy might have argued) "wears old flannel trousers year in, year out, and seems none the worse for it . . ." "You will not yourself" (Philosophy might have shouted) "have to pay. The Government will sustain upon its ample and unwearied shoulders the burden of compensation for this unparalleled loss . . ." "King Edward VII wore a new pair of trousers every day of his life . . ." "You might have been standing" (Philosophy might have murmured softly) "or sitting in one or other of those pairs of trousers at the moment when another bomb even more reckless and indiscriminate assailed them from the sky . . ." "Have you not sometimes had suits, had trousers, which proved after a few weeks of pleasure to yourself, and ecstatic admiration from the world, a disappointment . . .?"

But thank heaven I have schooled myself long ago to shut my ears to the detestable loquaciousness of Philosophy.

I remained for some time daunted; not inconsolable perhaps, not inclined to defeatism, but a little war-weary, and disposed to wonder when the tide would at last begin to turn.

And now only this morning I have a further note from my tailor.

*"You will be glad to hear that the two pairs of trousers have been recovered after all, and quite undamaged."*

If this notable set-back to the *Luftwaffe* brings to my readers a tithe of the satisfaction that it brought to me, I shall not have written these few words in vain.

EVOE.

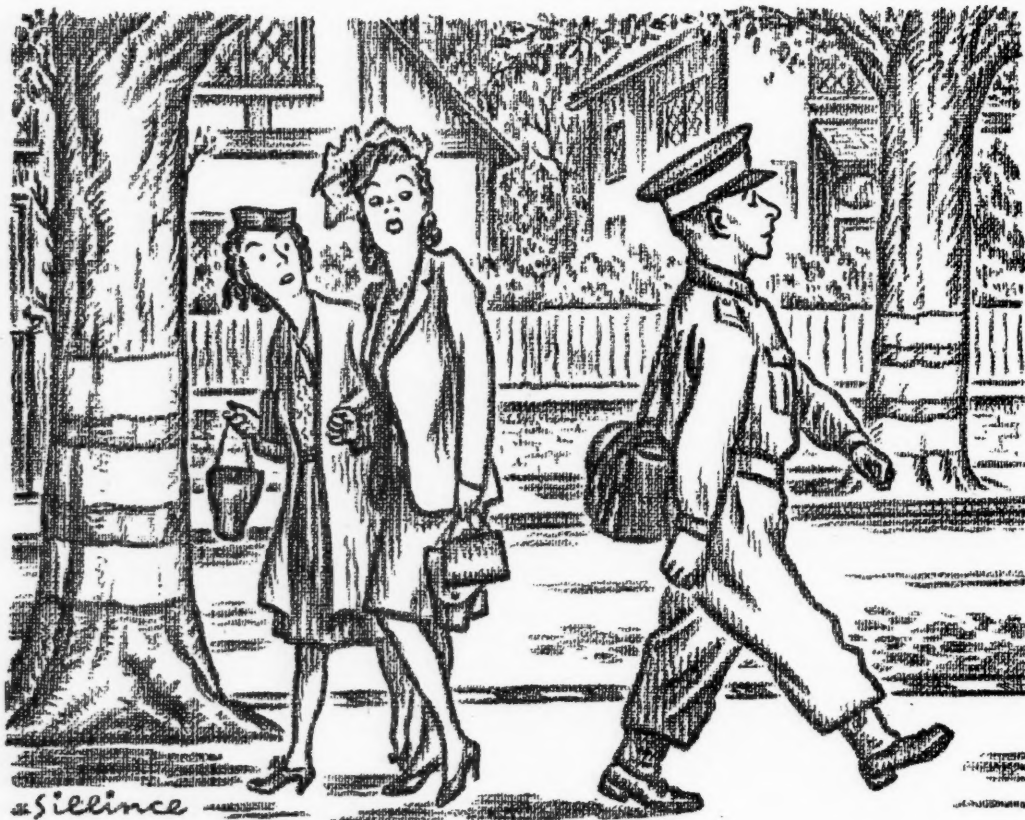


*"I'll have to dash. There's going to be an air-raid alarm in about seventeen and a half minutes."*





THIRD RIDE



*"The white band round 'is 'at? So's 'e can be seen in the black-out, I suppose."*

## Parcels

**I**F you are the sort of person who can tie up a parcel and address it and post it all in five minutes, this isn't going to help you. There are such people, I know. Some years ago the Post Office recognized them officially by inventing a special post for parcels with the ends left open. I don't know if it still holds good, because I never had any truck with it, and nor did the sort of people I'm writing this for.

As these people know, it was much easier to send a parcel before the war, when there was no need to save paper. You took whatever you wanted the parcel made of and wrapped it in tissue paper, then in corrugated cardboard, then you put it in a box with some more corrugated cardboard round the box, tied it with string, put that

box in another box, tied this other box up too, and finished with a piece of brown paper folded double first, and two kinds of string, one too thick and one not thick enough. Well, times have changed and it's not so straightforward now. But the *principle* of a parcel is the same. War or no war, you still have to get the inside of the parcel inside the outside and make it stay there.

Suppose your parcel is to be made up of one big thick book, two smaller books of equal length and width but different thicknesses, a cylindrical tin of old-fashioned butter drops, an alarm clock, a bicycle lamp and a sweater; and suppose it's going to Northumberland. It makes no difference where, except that the farther it has to go the tighter you feel you ought

to tie the string, but Northumberland is a good representative place because Northumberland, printed in capitals, won't fit into the space between the string and the edge of the parcel.

Well, now. You put your things on the floor. You roll the alarm clock in half the sweater. (This is why you are sending the sweater.) You roll the bicycle lamp in the other half. The point is that these things have glass and can break, and if you roll them separately they have a chance of breaking separately. Then you put the tin of old-fashioned butter drops in the bit of the sweater left in the middle. Now you have a fairly compact lump which you roll in an old tweed jacket because the sweater wasn't enough.

Now for the books. You put the

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big thick book on the pile, then the two smaller books. As they are of different thicknesses one is certain to be thicker than the other (just as this other is certain to be thinner), and the thicker one will stick up. You can get round this either by leaving out both these books or putting in a very thin book as well. Now you have the inside of the parcel ready, except for the letter to go with it.

Everyone who has ever packed up a parcel has had an instinctive fear that the person who opens the parcel won't see the letter inside. No one knows why we have this fear. All that science has found out is that it is connected with the impulse which makes us put our hand up at a bus-stop even if all the people in front of us are putting their hands up too. As this fear is instinctive it will persist wherever you decide to put the letter in the parcel; but if you put it on the top of the pile, so that it is the last thing you see as you wrap the parcel up, then you will know that to the person who unwraps it it will be the *first* thing; unless of course you remember that when you wrap a parcel you wrap it *upside-down*, with the fold at the top; but you can get round this by remembering that this person who is to unwrap the parcel will unwrap it upside-down too. (You see what I mean about the principle of the thing being the same as it always was.)

Now for the paper to wrap it in. Some people find they have some, covered on both sides with crossed-out addresses, already in the house; others go to the shop whose shopkeeper they get on best with, buy something they need anyhow, like ten cigarettes, and ask if the shopkeeper has a piece of brown paper to spare. The difference between shop paper and the other sort is that the crossed-out addresses on shop paper are all written on labels. Parcel-wrappers have an even worse instinctive fear, that the postman will take the parcel to a crossed-out address, and they think they have no chance against a lot of labels. All I can say to help them is that things are never so bad as they seem.

Next we come to the actual wrapping. Even if your heap of things is where you left it when you began looking for the paper it won't be quite the same. The tweed jacket part will be sort of bigger and looser. This is only because anything a parcel-wrapper rolls up and leaves tends to unroll itself; it's one of the nubs in circumstance which parcel-wrappers come up against. All you have to do is to unroll it—now is your chance to switch the alarm clock off and get the

sweater back—roll it up again, put the paper round it, dig the paper left over each end into two sort of triangles, bend these triangles over and tie the whole thing up with as much string as you can find.

There you have your parcel. Or you will have when you have unrolled the jacket again and rolled it up tight enough to be able to get the string round twice everywhere, tie it in an awful lot of knots and leave about six inches over for a loop. This loop, by the way, is vestigial; it was once used to carry the parcel by, till people found it broke. But parcel-wrappers still put these loops on, as a kind of sop to fate to make up for the crossed-out addresses.

All you have to do now is print the address in big letters in the top right-hand corner, print it in smaller ones, so as to get it in this time, in the bottom left-hand corner, write it on a label, tie the label on, write—on the back of the parcel—your own name and address, with "from" in front of it and very big in case the postman sends it back to you; even so it's a bit risky, but it's just as risky not to put your own address on, parcel-wrappers argue—take it to the post office, get the post office girl to weigh it, and pay for the stamp. You realize now that *you* have posted the parcel. Most people find this difficult to grasp. They stand there a little longer, wondering if everything is all right, and they are rewarded by the biggest, in fact the only thrill in a parcel-wrapper's experience. They see the girl putting the postmark on the stamp. It makes their parcel look like a real parcel; and no parcel-wrapper could ask for anything more than that.



"What I said was, 'My husband is leaving on a frantically hush-hush mission to Belgrade on Tuesday!'"

## Music at Midday

IT is owing to the vision and enterprise of Miss MYRA HESS that music has come to the National Gallery to replace our vanished pictures. The daily chamber-music concerts have been running since shortly after the outbreak of war, giving employment to hundreds of artists, and large sums have been raised for unemployed musicians. Recently, however, the music became a *passacaglia* on a ground-bass of air-raid sirens, and players and listeners were fain to follow Persephone on her autumn journey to the underworld. The transfer of the concerts from the Gallery to the air-raid shelter has, unhappily, involved financial loss, though musically it is an improvement; marble halls are all very well for a palace of dreams, a picture gallery or a swimming bath, but every cranny hides an echo which voices its own version of the music as its wayward fancy dictates, so that listeners hear not one concert at a time, but many. We were recently, however, fortunate enough to hear in the air-raid shelter a single and very fine version (that of the Griller Quartet) of two of BEETHOVEN'S String Quartets, *Op. 127 in E flat* and the *Rasoumovsky in C major*. The latter is typical of BEETHOVEN'S middle period and was composed nineteen years earlier than *Op. 127*, which belongs to his last and greatest years, and has much of the remoteness and terseness of expression which characterize his late works. The Griller Quartet did full justice to both; the wonderful slow movement of the *Op. 127* was beautifully played and the *Op. 59* received a most exhilarating performance.

The success which has attended these recitals proves beyond all doubt that chamber music, if given at the right time, place and price, attracts a large public. Not that this in itself is anything new; for one JOHN BANISTER in the late seventeenth century gave the first public chamber concerts in a room in Whitefriars "rounded with seats and small tables, alehouse fashion. One shilling was the price, and call for what you pleased; there was very good musick, for Banister found means to procure the best bands in towne . . ." Miss HESS has certainly given us "the best bands in towne"; the price is still a shilling, and if "what you please" is not included in it the musical fare is still cheap at the price, and there is a most admirable sandwich bar.



## At the Pictures

*Pride and Prejudice*

(EMPIRE, LEICESTER SQUARE)

THE film and the novel are different forms of art, not interchangeable, and the film has its own inalienable rights. I think it would be unjust to take offence at the way in which *Pride and Prejudice* has been at the same time magnified, simplified and speeded up, at the carriages which race instead of jog, the unduly splendid grounds of Longbourn, with no hermitage, by the way, or prettyish little wilderness, *Elizabeth's* fair hair, and the unkind cuts of the dialogue. Enough is left between JANE AUSTEN's humour and the producer's to make a film which, like *Elizabeth's* singing at the piano, is a performance pleasing though by no means capital; and the dovelike fluttering of the bonnets, laces and shrubberies in sunshine of Californian brilliance is exceedingly pretty.

However, not in the name of JANE AUSTEN, which has been rather too often invoked, but in the name of comedy I have to protest against this version of *Pride and Prejudice*. In an unlucky mood of universal benevolence the producers have decided to make all the characters as good as gold. *Mr. Bennet*, far from being disagreeable and sarcastic, is a whimsical charming pedant who runs eagerly to tell the news about *Lydia's* marriage to his wife instead of remaining indifferently in the library; *Mr. Collins* is pathetic rather than intolerable; *Darcy* is open-faced and genial; and *Lady Catherine de Bourgh* turns out to be an arch old matchmaker who has merely been testing *Elizabeth's* character by her rudeness and the classic interview at Longbourn.

All this is merely another illustration of the familiar Hollywood theory that comedy is uproariously good-natured. It is nothing of the sort. Comedy, and especially eighteenth-century comedy, is a matter of contrasts, and if *Jane* is sweet and good, and *Elizabeth* nearly perfect, *Lady Catherine's* pride and *Mr. Collins's* tediousness are more than faults—they are vices. JANE AUSTEN, it may be remembered, was living at the turn of a century which counted pride and dullness as the two unforgivable sins. What is more, however much

you may dislike the conclusion, pure comedy depends and has always depended on a firm basis of social distinctions. They are a rock you will find if you dig into *Le Misanthrope* and *The Rivals* and *Twelfth Night*, as well as *The Admirable Crichton*; and JANE AUSTEN, while her novel depends on *Darcy's* being too proud, never suggests for a moment that he has nothing to be proud about. Ten thousand pounds and Pemberley give him a right not to despise people but certainly to patronize them. The film, however, admits nothing so uncomfortable as a fixed principle of snobbery. *Darcy's* haughtiness is simply a whim at which everyone laughs heartily, and Wickham and the underplot are so badly trimmed that there is

MAUREEN O'SULLIVAN, as *Jane*, is something sweeter even than saccharine. The only member of the cast who rings true as a bell is ANN RUTHERFORD, who gives a remarkably good version of *Lydia*, particularly in the homecoming scene. There is, moreover, the general impression which all American and nearly all English actors give in period films—that every one has had fun dressing up and is having a good time; only Sir CEDRIC HARDWICKE, with a very few others, is free from the habit of playing history as a series of charades, with war as a camp concert. To be fair, however, the dressing up is good, and the swimming gait of the ladies is, I imagine, better than anything JANE AUSTEN ever saw herself.

*Maryland*

(REGAL, MARBLE ARCH)

Horse-racing on the screen, like the mediæval ordeal by water, seems to have the virtue of dividing characters very sharply into good and bad and making their motives remarkably simple.

In this film FAY BANTER is a well-meaning lady who develops an extreme distaste for horseflesh after her husband has been killed in a hunting accident. Her trainer (WALTER BRENNAN) takes himself and his pretty daughter off, and her son, *Lee* (JOHN PAYNE), is sent to England with the notion of curing his passion for riding. Little does *Mrs. Danfield* guess, though the audience does, that *Lee* will become a

champion amateur jockey, and as a consequence fall in love with the trainer's daughter and ride his leading string in the Maryland Hunt Cup. Cavalier wins the race with flying Technicolors, *Lee* wins the daughter, and *Mrs. Danfield* returns to the Turf.

*Maryland* is satisfactorily bright and noisy. The sky is a brilliant blue, the heroine an enchanting pink, and the racecourse gives a new meaning to the expression "green as grass." And there is a splendid scene at a negro revivalist meeting which has almost nothing to do with the film but is the best thing in it. P. M. K.



[Pride and Prejudice]

## KNEE WORK

*Elizabeth Bennet* . . . . . GREER GARSON  
*Mr. Collins* . . . . . MELVILLE COOPER

not much more point in *Elizabeth's* prejudices.

Once social restrictions are disregarded, comedy, so to speak, undoes its corsets, slips into a tea-gown and turns into farce; and mild farce is in fact what the film version of *Pride and Prejudice* has become. This, however, may be even more the fault of the cast than of the production. EDNA MAY OLIVER, as *Lady Catherine de Bourgh*, and EDMUND GWENN, as *Mr. Bennet*, give their usual performances as themselves, and as a result are radiantly good-natured; LAURENCE OLIVIER, as *Darcy*, short of blacking his face, can hardly look anything but affable; MELVILLE COOPER, like only too many English character-actors of distinction, acts all costume parts as a heavy comic out of Dickens, and his *Mr. Collins* follows the way of the rest. GREER GARSON, as *Elizabeth*, has great charm but no personality, and

"Required, small Inn or Hotel, situated on or near coarse fishing river or broad. Tenancy or purch.—Advt. in Daily Paper.

Tenancy fight harder, but purch are more difficult to hook.



There seem to be two schools of thought—



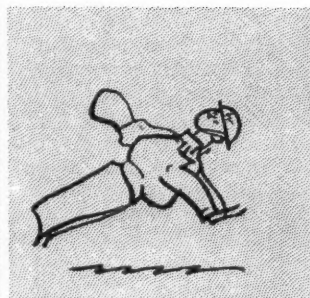
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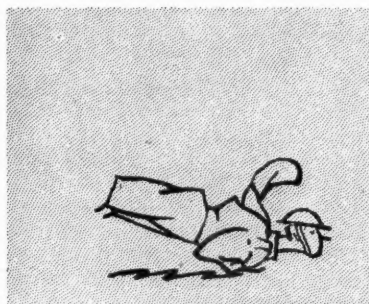
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advisable



to throw themselves



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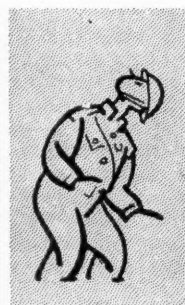
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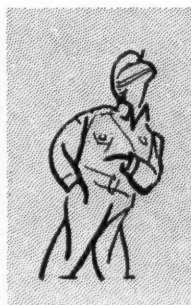
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if



it



would have been



advisable.



"Can you lend me 4/3d.?"

### Concerning Mrs. Spicer

**M**RS. SPICER  
Has been ever so much nicer  
Since a fire-bomb fell  
On her doorstep at Dingley Dell.  
The butcher has remarked upon it,  
So has the baker, so have Mrs. Bonnet  
The postmistress and Colonel Dillage  
Our local warden. In fact the whole village  
Has noticed it. She positively beams—  
Like someone whose pet dreams  
Have suddenly come true. Even her companion,  
"Poor little Miss Trevanion,"  
Who with great aplomb  
Smothered the bomb  
With cabbages, confided to Susan Veale  
That she's much less "difficile."  
But what is more surprising,  
The other day in Market Rising  
She actually stopped to chat  
With Sophie Marrowfat!  
She hadn't spoken to Sophie  
Since that good lady won the knitting trophy  
Presented by Lady Green  
Way back in '17.

Oh, yes, the two old dears  
Have been "at needles drawn" for years and years!  
Of course now she's got a bomb to boast of  
She's forgotten a whole host of  
Ancient grievances, imagined slights,  
And what she's pleased to call her "rights."  
As Bob observed up at the inn,  
"One touch of Hitler makes the old world kin—  
Or leastways will do, sooner or later."  
Bob thinks that if she found a crater  
Some morning in her garden, Mrs. Spicer  
Would be even nicer!

### Aunt Tabitha and the Staff of Life

**W**HEN my Aunt Tabitha announced that at breakfast, which we so often have, only brown bread and toast would be served in future, she created what her fat uncle, hunting about for the right word and not finding it, called a *furor*.

"What?" he bellowed. "No salt? No pepper? No knives and forks?"

Everyone's attention was at once arrested. Even her youngest great-grandfather, though he went on talking to himself, ceased to listen to himself.

"You misunderstand me," said Aunt Tabitha with a smile that is often called winning but has never won anything yet. "What I mean is that such toast as we have at breakfast will in future be brown."

"And about time too," her thin uncle said. "Why, often you'd never know you weren't eating bread."

"You are eating bread," one of the cousins pointed out.

Aunt Tabitha's thin uncle was at that moment eating a small kidney, and he started to his feet in a passion to say so; but Aunt Tabitha fired a gun into the air to attract notice and set out to explain the complicated situation.

"You misunderstood me and he misunderstood you," she said to her thin uncle, "and you——"

"I misunderstood you," her fat uncle interrupted indignantly.

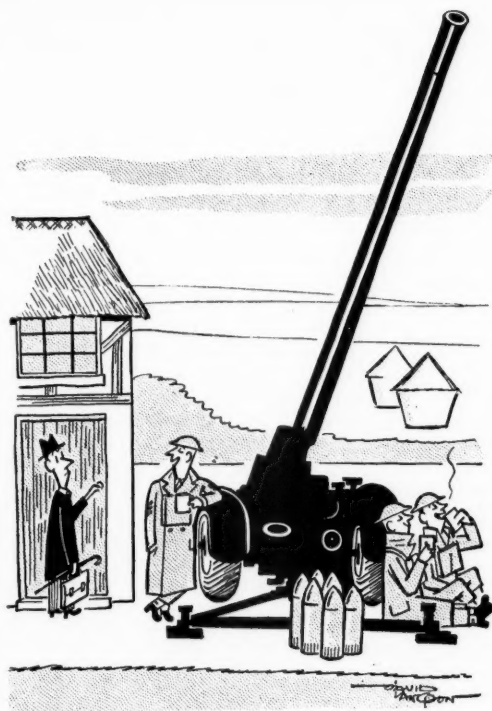
Aunt Tabitha's eldest great-grandfather leaned over to tap him on the shoulder and said gently "You misunderstand the girl. She means——"

Fortunately at this moment an alert sounded. We were having breakfast on the roof, as we do all the year round except when the weather is uncomfortably hot; and we lost no time in sending our two spotters down to the basement, where they calmly sat and sang songs. The rest of us stayed up there because none of us can sing, and to split their rations. In any event, the impasse for which the conversation was rapidly heading was successfully avoided, and Aunt Tabitha was able to continue her explanation.

"I am ordering brown bread in future in order to save us all, at no matter what cost," she declaimed, "from vitamin deficiency."

"I flatter myself I was never deficient in vitamins," quavered Aunt Tabitha's great-great-Aunt Maud, with a few steps of an old-world hornpipe. "I well remember how my father would say to strangers 'La, Sir!' or 'La, Madam!' as the case might be, 'the girl is a solid mass of vitamins! Not Mr. Fox nor Mr. Pitt in their wildest moments could conceive of a young female more rich in——'"

Aunt Tabitha was luckily able to forestall her third great-grandfather, whose lips were even then framing the words



"Good evening, Sir."

"You misunderstand," by pouring over him some of her excellent coffee.

"Boys and girls," she then cried, "brown bread is better for you. I would not give the needles in the fins of a halibut for white bread, from which the essential vitamins have been removed by a process akin to that commonly known as the 'polishing' of rice. The continual eating of polished rice, as I do not have to tell you, boys and girls, gives you beri-beri."

"In order to avoid the risk of beri-beri from eating polished rice," said her fat uncle complacently, "I keep a small roughener. Before I began to use this roughener you could often see your face in my rice, but now you would have difficulty in seeing so much as a pin's head in it. My little roughener has paid for itself over and over again; indeed, I am hoping that before long it will stop; I have a better use for the money."

The taller of Aunt Tabitha's grandfathers got slowly and ponderously to his feet. He then sat slowly and ponderously down again, for it was my Uncle Herbert's turn to speak, not his.

"Loath as I should be to suppose that any words of mine," Uncle Herbert began, "were about to be instrumental in casting a gloom over an assembly the happy smiling faces of which will haunt me, I greatly fear, all my life, I feel nevertheless bound to inquire what, if we are in future to be given only brown bread, is to happen to the vast supplies of white bread at present lurking smugly in the commodious recesses of our well-stocked larder."

"You mean the well-stocked recesses of our commodious larder," said Aunt Tabitha's thin uncle.

"I mean nothing of the kind!" bellowed my Uncle Herbert.

Cries of "No, no!" "Yes, yes!" "You misunderstand!" and "All change!" began to resound on every side, and argument raged now back, now forth, for hours.

In the end it was decided that the remaining white bread should be passed through a derrick powered by a 2,000 h.p. outboard motor and compressed into serviceable railway-sleepers, after which it was to be sent post-haste to Brazil to be burned instead of coffee.

R. M.

## At "The Mulberry Tree"

"WELL, as to bombs," sez Sam to me  
As we takes our ale at "The Mulberry Tree,"  
"Our luck has held to now, so why  
Shouldn't it hold on through? sez I.

What's worryin' me worse," sez he,  
"Is all these forms as now there be;  
There's forms for ev'ry dratted minute—  
There ain't no sense, as I see, in it.

Forms they come pourin' more an' more,  
There ain't no time to thresh an' store,  
There ain't no time to pull or reap;  
I fills up forms when I'm asleep."

Maybe he's right. But sure I am  
That when a form comes in for Sam  
Mostly his wife fills up the thing  
While he goes off a-ferreting.

A. W. B.

"A carter in one roadway was about 30ft. wide."

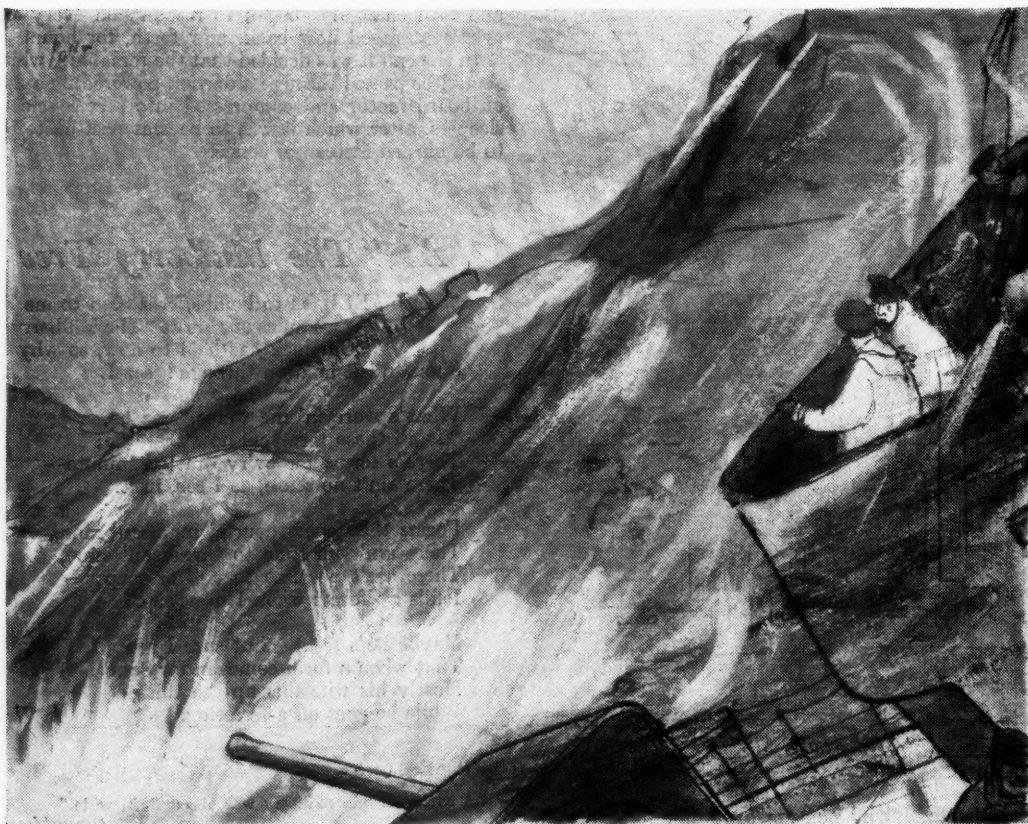
Devonshire Paper.

Let us have men about us that are fat.



"Why, that's magnificent!"





*"I can't imagine why, but I feel sick."*

### *Oh, What a Flop . . . !*

**O**H, what a flop the old Top Wop will be when all is done—  
That mass of flesh and subterfuge, that hireling of the Hun,  
That bag of glands and vanity, big words and little wars,  
That Prince of Blunderbusses, and that Emperor of Bores!

That big, brown, bald adventurer, that friend of every thug,  
That dupe, deceived, deceiver, and that monumental mug;  
Who butchers all his friends to make a Prussian holiday,  
And—the Censor wouldn't like me to say all I'd like to say.

It's odd how much I hate the Hun (and Hitler is the worst),  
But when I see the old Top Wop I find I want him first;  
And this is why I hardly care just how the war will stop—

Whoever draws a dividend it will not be the Wop.

Most villains, on a count, can show a little for their sins:  
I believe Lucrezia Borgia was a fond mamma (with twins).

Old Nero, after all, could play the fiddle pretty well;  
But what's the use of Musso it is very hard to tell.

Caligula, they tell us, had a mother, and her love;  
And Goering, when you get him in the home, can be a dove;  
There may be marks for Hitler from a few, though not from me;  
But *what* a flop the old Top Wop in History will be!

At last the little Wops come out, like those old Roman geese,  
And think by noisy Wopwork to affright the sons of Greece,  
But History, I think, will make another mighty tome  
For the glory that was Greece (and is), the gander that was Rome.

What shall we do with Hitler, say we all, when war is done?  
What shall we do to Musso when we've biffed his brother Hun?

Let's put the two together in a cell four feet by three,  
And let them talk and talk and talk. And *what* a flop they'll be!

A. P. H.





### THE BURGLAR'S MATE

"I suppose you want me to come up and push you in."

## Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND

**T**HIS Fund, which was originally started in order to purchase supplies of raw material and distribute them to Voluntary Working Parties for the Hospitals, has already sent out nearly 30,000 lb. of Knitting Wool, 20,000 yards of Unbleached Calico, and the same amount of Veltex, as well as many other materials of all varieties, to be made up into comforts for the wounded.

It need hardly be said that civilian casualties at the present time caused by enemy action are unhappily numerous, and the operation of our Fund has of course been extended to the provision of medical and surgical supplies for these.

At the same time the approach of winter is causing a renewed demand on behalf of all the Services—especially amongst the men whose duty lies in exposed situations—for Balaclava helmets, gloves, mittens, woollen waistcoats, and the like.

Mr. Punch, in expressing his very sincere gratitude for the generous help already given by subscribers, renews therefore his appeal both for the sake of the Fighting Services and of civilians who have suffered from the ruthless barbarity of the enemy, in the hope that plenty of supplies may be available for all, now, before the severest and coldest weather sets in.

Though we know well that these are days of great financial difficulty, we yet ask you, those who can, to send some donation, large or small, according to your means, to PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.



*"We're going on to the next station; it's a better programme."*

## Impressions of Parliament

### Business Done

**Tuesday, November 5th.—House of Lords: Statement by Foreign Secretary on the International Situation.**

**House of Commons: Statement on the War by the Prime Minister.**



THE TRUMPETER  
COMMANDER KING-HALL

**Wednesday, November 6th.—House of Lords: Royal Assent to Bills.**

**House of Commons: Statements on the Means Test and the Home Guard; Debate on Old Age Pensions. The inevitable Secret Session.**

**Tuesday, November 5th.**—Perhaps it was the date that was to blame. Perhaps the prohibition of fireworks for the younger generation made our legislators so prone to oratorical "fireworks."

Whatever the reason, there were certainly plenty of fireworks, most of them provided by that master of explosive eloquence, Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN—playfully known in the smoke-rooms as Mr. "Annoying" BEVAN.

Mr. BEVAN knows a good deal about Parliamentary procedure and, when he wants to, can present a case with more persistent and pointed logic than most Members. However, of him and his pyrotechnic display, more anon. The star turn of the day's sitting was to be Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL's statement on the war.

Mr. CRAVEN ELLIS, at Question-time,

wanted to know why we were not engaged in "total war."

Slowly unwinding his legs and going to the table, Mr. CHURCHILL said he had the impression—shared, he thought, by several people in this country—that we were engaged in total war. He did not quite know what Mr. CRAVEN ELLIS expected in the way of war—"probably something pretty unpleasant"—but even this had not been lacking. Mr. CHURCHILL said all this with such an air of innocent desire to please that the House roared with laughter, and Mr. CRAVEN ELLIS, nettled, gave notice that he would raise a debate on the subject later.

Mr. CHURCHILL seemed not to be unduly disturbed.

Incidentally, Sir EDWARD GRIGG and Mr. RICHARD LAW, representing the War Office, have invented a new technique in the answering of awkward questions. It is simple. It consists of not answering them, and of studying the ceiling when angered Members demand a reply. An interesting development, but not one likely to prove popular or long-lived.

A protest by Sir IRVING ALBERY that, since the SPEAKER had permitted a question, it must be one of some importance, worthy of reply, produced cheers from the House but no response from the muted pair.

Perky Mr. DAVID GRENFELL, Secretary for Mines, had the good news that special arrangements were being made to give us all coal in the coming winter months. There are 3,500,000 tons in London.

Mr. CRAVEN ELLIS, from his eyrie near the door, leaped up and engaged in a duet with Mr. RHYD DAVIES, on the Opposition Front Bench. Nobody knew what either said, and they gave up after a minute's discordant unison, during which neither would accord the other "the honour."

Then Mr. CRAVEN ELLIS tried another duet, this time with Mr. GRAHAM WHITE. Same result. But, not to be outdone, the moment Mr. GRAHAM WHITE stopped speaking, Mr. CRAVEN ELLIS was up again with a demand for more coal for his constituency of Southampton, which was apparently the theme of the two duets also.

Sir PATRICK HANNON wanted aliens put to useful work instead of being interned—a suggestion that drew from Sir HENRY MORRIS-JONES the bland inquiry: "Are none of our own people unemployed?"

Colonel GRETTON, Chairman of the Select Committee inquiring into the conduct of Mr. ROBERT BOOTHBY in relation to some Czecho-Slovakian funds, sought and obtained permission

for the ATTORNEY-GENERAL to present evidence in the possession of the Government and to hear Mr. BOOTHBY or his counsel.

Then Mr. CHURCHILL began his war statement with the reassuring comment that the position was not unsatisfactory. Herr HITLER had said that, since we would not give in, he would raze our cities to the ground; but he had not. True, he had killed 14,000 and wounded 20,000 civilians, four-fifths of them in London. At the same time, he had killed 300 soldiers and wounded 500 others—a grim comment on his careful selection of military objectives in his raids.

There had been little damage to our war effort, and even the small amount of time lost would be made up soon. None of our essential services had broken down.

He told how he had come across a group of steel-helmeted men in the black-out, had asked them what was going on, and had received the (rather irrelevant) reply: "It's a grand life if you don't weaken!" This *non sequitur*, he thought, should be our motto for the winter.

He hinted mysteriously that the



JOSH FOR HELLAS

"I would sooner save Greece, which is prepared to fight for itself, than save Egypt, which is not prepared to fight for itself."  
Col. Wedgwood.

falling off in the intensity of German attacks on London was not *entirely* due to the weather. There were "other things going on," said he, with a confident twinkle in his eye. Anyway, we were well on the way to superiority





"Curse it! Missed the Grand Slam!"

in the air—which in the rolling Churchillian terminology was "an indispensable precursor of victory."

On the whole, we had no reason to regret that HITLER had chosen to try to break us by attacking our towns and countryside.

We should try to overcome the U-boat menace, even with the unfair burden placed on our broad shoulders by the denial to us of the use of the Southern Irish ports. We could expect an even more severe U-boat campaign next year, but we were making preparations to meet it—immense preparations.

And, he added, fingering his chin, we must look forward to what we should do in 1943 and 1944. One thing would be to produce all the food this fertile island would yield.

Invasion? Well, less likely now, but by no means out of the picture. It might come at any time, in any form, and all our defence services (not forgetting the Home Guard) must be on the alert—ready, aye, ready, for anything.

Anyway, even if nothing more happened, our fight up to now was one of history's major victories and (with a determined leap into another

metaphor) a "monumental milestone on our road to victory."

The Army, which was to be made into a world-beating fighting machine, would help the civil authorities in dealing with the results of air-raids, but he was against our soldiers becoming general helps, to take on any odd job that was given them. To hear "some people" talk, said Mr. CHURCHILL, carefully looking at no part of the House in particular, one would think that the Army was intended to be a sort of Universal Uncles organization instead of a fighting machine.

MUSSOLINI had attacked small, but famous and immortal, Greece, and we, even though France, the other partner to our guarantee, was now out of the running, intended to do all we could to help Greece.

We should certainly bomb Italy whenever possible.

Mr. LEES-SMITH, who has the somewhat thankless task of leading an Opposition that has no wish at all to oppose and even less to be led, wanted Italy bombed, even if it meant letting off Germany for awhile.

Italy, said he, probably with recollections of the "boot" our nursery governesses saw in the map of Italy, was "as much the Achilles Heel of Germany as was oil."

Mr. HORE-BELISHA, whose attendances at the House these days are a model of watchful patience, "went for" the Government for not making their war "total" enough. He too wanted showers of bombs on Italy as well as a general pepping up everywhere. Mr. A. V. ALEXANDER, First Lord of the Admiralty, who had a day or two earlier given on the radio first news of the British Army's landing in Crete, was criticized for giving it at three in the morning and, withal, to overseas countries. Why not tell Parliament first?

If this sort of thing went on, Mr. HORE-BELISHA said sepulchrally, Parliament would be reduced to useless inanition—or, as Mr. CHURCHILL would have it, "innocuous desuetude."

Young Mr. QUINTIN HOGG had an unlucky day. He wanted to raise some complaint about the Ministry of Information. Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN rose up to ask the SPEAKER whether



this was in order, to receive the reply that *any* Member could raise *any* question on the adjournment motion. Mr. BEVAN thought this ruling would do "grievous damage" to Parliament—and said so with heat.

Mrs. MAVIS TATE, who is a distant relative of Mr. HOGG's, deserted him and cheered the objectors. But Mr. HOGG, almost undaunted, went on with his "pirate" speech, in the course of which he said that there were "busy-bodies and mischief-makers" in every Party in the House—a statement that drew loud (and apparently both unexpected and embarrassing) cheers.

The moment Mr. HOGG sat down, having expressed confidence that he would receive a reply, Mr. BEVAN got up and switched the debate back on to the old lines of the war situation, taking immediate advantage of the SPEAKER's ruling.

They did not want to be like the Reichstag, listening to a long speech by the PRIME MINISTER, saying "Amen," and then going home again. The people needed "deep and inexhaustible

fountains of moral inspiration," said Mr. BEVAN, ending his half-hour's Brock's Benefit with a flourish and a couple of metaphorical Catherine wheels—or were they Roman candles?

Then Commander KING-HALL said a piece about the need for a Battle of Brains as well as a Battle of Bodies, which was apparently intended to continue the discussion of the war situation.

Net result: Mr. HOGG got no reply to his special point, and nobody replied to the day's war policy debate either.

And, to cap it all, Lord HAILSHAM, Mr. HOGG's father, arrived in the Peers' Gallery just in time to see the House rise and to learn that his heir's oration was already enshrined in history and *Hansard*.

Lord HAILSHAM could not have had much difficulty in tearing himself away from the House of Peers, where, apart from a statement by Lord HALIFAX pretty much on the lines of the PRIME MINISTER'S, the proceedings were unexciting.

Wednesday, November 6th. — The

sitting was notable for a statement by Sir EDWARD GRIGG about the 1,700,000 members of the Home Guard. It was so long that there was some justification for the current jest that it contained a personal word for every single H.G.

Boiled down, it promised a measure of militarization for the Home Guard without, however, destroying its informality or "friendliness." There are to be commissioned and non-commissioned ranks, but no other changes in service conditions.

Mr. CHURCHILL announced a modification of the household means test for unemployment and old age payments. This seemed to give qualified satisfaction to most M.Ps.

Before settling down to a discussion on pensions the Commons received, with traditional formal rudeness, the Lords' Messenger, BLACK ROD, who (having survived for the umpteenth time the slamming of the door in his face) summoned that honourable House to witness the Royal Assent being given to Bills.



"It looks as if he's sickening for promotion."

## Home Guard Goings-On

### Loss of Public Confidence

OUR Section has had a humiliating experience this week. What its repercussions will be is a subject for nervous speculation amongst us. There is a sporting chance of course that the affair will never reach the ears of the authorities, but on the other hand the day may not be far off when our Section Leader is publicly deprived of his chevrons while we of the rank-and-file stand by in shame waiting for our buttons to be snipped off. Our destiny is in the hands of thirty-six civilians, any one of whom may be public-spirited enough to bring our military careers to an ignominious close; and although the passage of three uneventful days suggests that we may now be out of danger, it seems only wise to get our word in first. The true facts are accordingly presented here.

Monday's rain poured down our necks and Monday's gale rushed up the backs of our greatcoats as we marched raggedly to our winter quarters at the Village Hall. Mr. Benn the butcher, leaning his vast frame into the wind and raising his voice above the tumult of the trees, observed that it was "a bit of an off-night for flat-bottomed boats," and little Mr. King, who had so much sail set that he could only tack doggedly in our rear, shrilled his agreement, adding with some satisfaction, "Airyplanes neither!" These staunch volunteers spoke the thoughts of us all. We were in for a Quiet Night. Apart from two rather uncomfortable hours of vigil and five slightly less uncomfortable hours of fitful sleep, we could look forward to a fairly comfortable evening's rummy. Let it be stated boldly that our Section is comprised of ardent gamblers, and on Quiet Nights sums as large as threepence have been known to change hands.

(In case a false impression has been given in these chronicles it should be said that not all our nights are quiet. While not constituting what our talkative Mr. Corker would call a "strategic objective" our village is nevertheless a popular spot for the "jettonizing" (to quote Mr. Corker again) of anything the *Luftwaffe* doesn't care to take back home. There is a theory of course that a long-derelict brick-works attracts attention, and some of our Company, after a two hours' watch in brilliant moonlight, have even felt that our sentry-box on the moor is over-conspicuous, but there

is little evidence to support these views.)

As we panted up to the Hall, bristling with rifles, field-dressings, anti-gas ointment, sandwiches, vacuum flasks and bananas, our rising spirits were suddenly sent scuttling down to zero. For inside the railings there was gathered a great concourse of bicycles, male and female; male and female also were the many murmuring voices which floated out to us from behind the blackened windows, punctuated from time to time with hearty rustic laughter. Even as we listened in bewilderment there came the imperious jangling of a hand-bell, and the voices and laughter swelled suddenly to an uproar, through which could be heard the shuffle of many feet and the squeal of pushed-back chairs. As the voices died to a murmur again, Mr. Punnett summed up the situation.

"Whist drive!" he exclaimed.

Mr. Corker snapped his fingers viciously and muttered to himself. Mr. King and Mr. Benn respectively declared that they would be blowed and would go to sea, and the rest of us turned to our Section Leader for guidance. Was there, we asked, any precedent for military procedure on finding the guard-room full of whist-playing civilians? Which was to come first, whist or war? Our Section Leader turned the problem over in his mind. Then he announced that we should have to go in.

The decision was received in silence. We were not without courage; we could face invasion, endure bombardment, investigate shadows in the dead of night; but to file through the middle of a whist drive, laying ourselves open to the witticisms of those who knew us intimately in civil life, was more than we felt we could face. Mr. Corker was the first to find his voice.

"No!" he cried hoarsely, continuing with more respect—"What I mean to say, I mean to say—"

"Well, Mr. Corker?"

Despair brought Mr. Corker to the point in record time.

"My wife'll be in there!" he burst out—"I'll never 'ear the last of it!"

In the darkness one or two breaths were drawn in sharply, indicating that Mr. Corker's more personal problem was not his alone.

A patriotic reticence had forbidden

us to disclose exactly how our spells of duty were occupied, but it was certain that feminine imagination had painted sombre pictures of hardships nobly borne, risks unflinchingly taken, fearful odds faced with a gallant smile—pictures, in short, which might be knocked sadly out of drawing by the spectacle of warrior-husbands gambling away the housekeeping money round a gas-fire. Clearly such tender illusions must be preserved at all costs. But how? The wind was blowing harder, the rain falling faster. Our hearts were filling with despair and our rifles with water when the voice of Mr. King was raised in sudden inspiration.

"There's a back door!" he squeaked—"on to the stage. There's curtains. I once sung 'ere!"

The fact that this last astounding revelation escaped comment speaks for the intensity of our welling relief. With one accord we surged in Mr. King's wake past the tangle of bicycles which leant against the side of the building, and presently ascended a short wooden stairway and slipped as silently as our equipment would allow through the providential back door on to a small and rickety platform. It was immediately obvious that need for caution was small. The sound of robustly-contested whist, though partially muffled by a pair of moth-eaten green velvet curtains which hid the players from view, would have drowned a far more boisterous counter-disturbance than we proposed to make. It seemed that with a little luck we should be able to enjoy our quiet night after all.

There was an old and dusty piano which proved an ideal rifle-rack, a stack of worm-eaten chairs, and a trestle-table supporting nothing but two vases of differing sizes but identically colourful design and two ragged brown paper parcels. These, with the exception of the large vase which we commandeered as an ash-tray (our usual soap-dish being difficult of access), we thrust under the piano with our haversacks, and when Mr. Tucker had been dispatched to take the first watch we unstacked half a dozen chairs and sat down with the feeling that treacherous waters had been skilfully navigated.

Looking back, it seems strange that not one of us had a premonition of what was to come. Though at that time of course none of us knew that it was

Mr. Benn's birthday, a circumstance now held by some to be at the root of the whole trouble.

It was after the first game of rummy, when the cards lay scattered between us and the halfpennies had been assembled in neat but shallow piles at our elbows, that Mr. Benn, a little flushed in the face, solemnly produced from his haversack three pint beer-bottles. Our Section Leader, who rightly frowns on the mingling of alcohol and duty, gave the bottles a glance of sharp suspicion, and had actually opened his mouth for disciplinary reproof when Mr. Benn said with an apologetic smile that it was only cider. He then began to unwrap six thick tumblers from a piece of yellowed newspaper.

"Oh," said our Section Leader, temporarily at a loss—"well . . ."

"It's my birthday," said Mr. Benn simply—"fifty to-day."

"Oh, well," said our Section Leader, disarmed. And Mr. Benn was instantly overwhelmed with congratulations and with professions of incredulity that he should be a day over forty-five. Mr. Corker seized the opportunity to tell us his own age, that of his wife and his brother-in-law, and his brother-in-law's parents at the time of their death. He would have added still further to these details if Mr. Benn, now expanding fully, had not thrust a packet of small cigars under his nose, thus surprising him into silence.

"I say!" we said as we lit our cigars and tasted our cider and slackened our belts and unbuttoned our tunics.

"Well," said our Section Leader, with that touch of nervousness common to proposers of toasts—"all the best, Mr. Benn!"

"All the best!" we echoed, springing to our feet and raising our glasses in the blue haze of Mr. Benn's cigars.

"All the best," responded Mr. Benn, preparing to drink his own health enthusiastically—"and many of 'em!"

At this moment the now familiar hand-bell jangled beneath us with more than its usual vigour. At this moment, and upon this all too easily misconstrued tableau, the Master of Ceremonies drew back the moth-eaten green velvet curtains and, with a confidence born of careful stage-management, took away our ash-tray.

"The first prize for ladies," he declaimed in the awful hush which had fallen amongst the nine whist tables, "goes to Mrs. Corker . . ."

Conscious that something was wrong, he wheeled round and noticed us. He then dropped the first prize for ladies. An apple-core bounced amongst the splintered remains. There was a silence



*"My son is an inventor and has already had two proposals turned down by the Government."*

that could be felt. It was broken by the prize-winner.

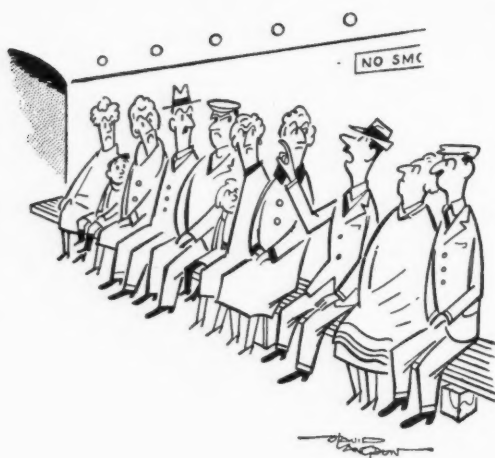
"Fred!" cried Mrs. Corker.

"Well, well," said a fat man at the far end of the room. "The 'Ome Guard at work!"

"Oh, my lor!" groaned Mr. Corker, and like a rushing mighty wind snatched up his rifle and disappeared into the night, presumably to relieve Mr. Tucker half an hour before his time. In his flight he dislodged our table-top, which cascaded its load of playing-cards, cigarette-packets, coppers and beer-bottles about our petrified feet.

Later, our Section Leader placed the simple facts before the Master of Ceremonies. Mr. King and Mr. Punnett have since placed them before Mrs. King and Mrs. Punnett, who were present playing as gentlemen; and no doubt Mr. Corker has emphasized to Mrs. Corker the distinction between beer and cider, between a brawl and a birthday. Our only remaining anxiety, as I said at the beginning, is whether any of those whist players will place the facts before our Platoon Commander—and what sort of a hand we shall hold if they do.





"Gunfire—Gunfire—H.E.—Gunfire—Gunfire . . ."

### Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### Alexandra Pilsudski

So much vital history, political experience and personal adventure go to the making of the *Memoirs of Madame Pilsudski* (HURST AND BLACKETT, 10/6) that you can read this engrossing book either for its own fascination, or for the light it sheds on the European cataclysm, or for both. It opens with the 1939 celebrations of the victory of "the poorest and shabbiest army in Europe" over Imperial Russia. It ends to-day, with PILSUDSKI's characteristically Polish motto—"To be vanquished and not surrender—that is victory." Between these first and last pages' extremes of fortune are unfolded the careers of ALEXANDRA and JOSEPH PILSUDSKI: hers the legend of a child and woman rebel, reared under Russian tyranny and launched, when she left school, on the road of conspiracy and gun-running that led most of its frequenters to Siberia. In the midst of these enterprises—with their spans of Russian and German prisons—she met her future husband and they worked for Poland's triumph together. Her memoirs shed light on many current problems: most striking perhaps is her detailed exposition of the two main causes of her country's collapse—poverty of equipment and the Nazi genius for the exploitation of youth.

#### Mr. Morgan's Grapes of Calm

Here is *The Voyage* (MACMILLAN, 9/-), on the face of it another solid dignified novel of deep spiritual values by Mr. CHARLES MORGAN; a story of a simple vinegrower, who keeps a prison, and a fashionable Parisian *disease* of the 'eighties, finding liberation in their love for each other because essentially they have the same singleness of vision; carefully composed, with a fine historical accuracy in every detail, down to the jewellery and the silk-topped boots and the technicalities of grape-growing; a novel with passion, character and background, which, compared with what Mr. MORGAN might have done, is so much waste paper. CHARLES MORGAN once wrote *The Gunroom*, which was a

very bad novel full of genuine feeling, and he then wrote *Portrait in a Mirror*, which was a very good novel with some genuine feeling and exquisite genuine art. Since then he has committed three major crimes against his own integrity as a novelist. First, he has become a student of nineteenth-century French and Anglo-French literature, and he has sunk so deep in it that perhaps no rescue party will ever unearth his originality; so that in *The Voyage* his *Thérèse Despreux*, his would-be lavish, enchanting and passionate cocotte, is a waxwork in costume which, wound up, echoes fragments of BALZAC, DE MAUPASSANT, GEORGE MOORE, and even ZOLA. The orgy in the café in Book III, though magnificently written, is simply a piece of literary intoxication. Second, he has become a symbolist and lost himself among fountains, prisons, flashing streams and voyages. Symbolism is a perilous wood of Westermaine where artists rapidly suffocate. Thirdly, he has become a fashionable philosopher, and degraded his characters into interpreters; and worse still, his present system, by which inward vision and power are acquired through bird-watching, vine-growing, boating with a touch of mysticism, and a total lack of responsibility, is only a dignified form of the present popular Hollywood philosophy summed up in FRANK CAPRA's *You Can't Take It With You*. However happily Mr. MORGAN appears as critic, symbolist and thinker, you cannot help regretting in him the loss of one of the few writers capable to-day of a great novel.

#### A Parson's Tale

Mr. A. S. M. HUTCHINSON has written several novels which have been extremely popular. *He Looked for a City* (JOSEPH, 9/6) may perhaps be of their fortunate company. To some readers, however, it will seem supercharged with emotionalism, with a sweetish sentimentality not adequately counterbalanced by the salt of humour. *The Reverend Gordon Brecque* is presented as a paragon of priestly virtue, and he suffers the tribulations which are the inevitable lot of a saint in a naughty world. Some of these, and the heavier, are fortuitous—the tragic deaths of his elder son, an uncompromising C.O. in the last war (the tale of whose sufferings is about the best thing in the book), and of the volatile, warmhearted younger daughter who is the apple of her father's eye. Others are the logical outcome of the man's character and situation. The unworldliness of his practice and the spirituality of his preaching are irritants to parishioners (be they colonel or shopkeeper) whose religion is but



"Then our Joe bollers 'Slope bipe!' and bang goes me blue crystal lamp-shade."





ONE UP.

1917.

H. M. Bateman, November 14th, 1917

the veneer of their materialism; and the Vicar is often in the black books of churchwardens or parish council. To all his trials he submits with the patience of Job and the meekness of St. Francis. It is a pity that a theme of such possibilities should have been spoilt by a mawkishness in the treatment which brings to mind the Sunday School prize books of mid-Victorian evangelism—though Mr. HUTCHINSON's style might have astonished the authors of those simple pieties.

#### John Buchan, Journalist

When the late Lord TWEEDSMUIR wrote his autobiography he did not even mention that as a young man he had edited a weekly paper called *The Scottish Review*—and killed it in less than two years because, fresh from the august *Spectator*, he insisted on giving a "penny public" fare more suited to a "sixpenny public." The question therefore arises whether he would have cared that the articles which he contributed to that forgotten periodical should be resuscitated. For, although in such titles as "The Balkans and German Policy" and "China and her Prospects" there is actuality enough, the particular events which called forth the articles bearing them seem, when

deprived of the historical context which could hardly be afforded them in a short leader, as remote from the sphere of our present sorrow as do the writer's apprehensions over Socialism from the tendency of our present policies. Nor did JOHN BUCHAN's temperate Liberalism amount to such a political philosophy as might have given these occasional utterances a value beyond their occasion. Nevertheless his writing even then was good enough to make these thirty-year-old and not all political *Comments and Characters* (NELSON, 7/6) still good desultory reading, especially for those with thirty-year-old memories.

Here are five little books which will be very welcome in these uneasy times: *Nothing to Do With the War*, by ANTHONY ARMSTRONG (Articles, 5/-); *The Changing Face of Britain*, by "FOUGASSE" (Pictures, 6/-); *Siren Song*, by A. P. HERBERT (Verses, 3/6); *Behind the Lines*, by A. A. MILNE (Verses, 5/-), all published by the House of METHUEN; and *The British Carry On*, by "PONT" (Pictures, 5/-), published by COLLINS. Most of the verses and all the pictures have appeared in our pages, but we are sure they can be reperused with great enjoyment by our readers, and we envy those who have this feast of fun still to come.

## Are You Feeling Spy-Feverish?

### Parachutists and How to Treat Them

WELL, in spite of all opposition, I'm continuing this series of articles. This week I intend to deal with parachutists. Or rather, tell you how to deal with them: the odds are that I shall be elsewhere at the time. What I mean is, in all the fully authenticated cases so far of parachutists landing in England, the man who told me about it for an absolute fact turned out on questioning to have been himself elsewhere at the time.

Now it seems that paratroop chutes . . . I mean, parachoop trutes . . . that is, parachroup toots . . . You know, I don't think my teeth can be in properly: I'll start again. It seems that PARACHUTE TROOPS fall into four classes.

1. The parachutist who lands in disguise and hopes the countryside will absorb him. First of all his disguise, it has been well drilled into us all by now, will be either postman, clergyman, or nun. Nothing else. If you see a milkman in a lonely field disentangling himself from a parachute he cannot really be a parachutist disguised as a milkman because there is no such thing. He is therefore a milkman disguised as a parachutist—probably a rather ignorant milkman secretly visiting the source of supply to see how the stuff is really made.

Now the parachutist in disguise is very easy to detect, for the simple reason that his line of work necessitates his landing in remote country districts. Disguised as a postman, therefore, he hasn't a chance, because everyone in any remote country district knows the postman and his business as well as he knows theirs. The fellow won't get far before some child pipes up: "Ma, whatzappened to Postman Hodge's face 'smarning?" and they'll notice it's gone all intense and palely brutal, instead of the usual genial vermilion—and that's the end of him.

Disguised as a clergyman his activities will be equally hampered, chiefly because his natural instinct will be to avoid talking to anyone he meets for fear of being detected. This will at once be noted as suspicious behaviour and result in his capture. It is well known that no clergyman in the remote English countryside can ever resist trying to get into conversation with everyone he meets and, if a favourable opportunity presents itself, touching him down for something for the Organ Repair Fund.

The nun disguised requires a little more definite action on your part.

Make an excuse to examine his (or her) arms and see if they're hairy.\* If they are you can arrest him as a parachutist, because the few real nuns who just happen to have hairy arms, poor dears, have never dared venture out of their nunneries since the first week after the war, when the story started. If they aren't hairy of course she's a real nun and you'll probably be arrested yourself—whatever excuse you made for looking at them in the first place.†

2. The parachutist who lands as himself, pinches a fellow's clothes and starts out to find his way to the nearest railway station for the purpose of sabotage. Being, I repeat, in the country, you needn't bother about him. He won't get far. I know from experience the kind of answer he'll get, for instance, if he asks the way from nine people out of ten in our village. (The tenth will be old Gummidge, who is deaf and will only give him a blank stare.) It'll be first: "The railway station?" repeated in various accents of surprised interrogation, as though the inquiry had been for some place like Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, followed at last by: "Oh, you mean the railway station," as though the chap had been speaking in code. Then will follow something like this: "You goes straight down there to Codger's Cottages and then turn left up Mill Lane to that corner where Aylett's straw-stacks used to be six years ago, and then over the stile into Marston's Four Acre and—well, that is, if so be you want to go by the footpath; but mebbe you'd better take the road, so don't go to Codger's Cottages at all but turn up the second side road at Haye's Barn . . ." This is liable to go on for hours—even if the parachutist tries to break away he'll be followed up the street—and other people will join in helpfully with different directions, till the fellow is practically a nervous wreck. So far from sabotage, all he'll want to do is to charter a private plane and go straight back home.

3. The parachutist who doesn't ask the way but is reckoning to go by the signposts. Don't bother about him either: he'll be in just as bad a fix because he'll find that they've all been removed. Then while he is standing at

\* Dropping a cigarette, or a rosary, or something is one way. Asking to see his (or her) vaccination marks is another.

† And particularly if it was vaccination-marks in the wrong place.

a lonely cross-roads trying to figure out whether Dimblebury Parva is to the left or the right, some passer-by who's equally puzzled and has been looking for half an hour for someone to question will come up hopefully and ask him the way to Little Wigglingtoe (pronounced Woo). Naturally the parachutist won't reply that he is a "stranger in these parts himself" because he'll think it will give him away. And that's just where he'll be had, because it is well known all over England that when, after looking half an hour, you do at last find someone to ask the way from, he invariably is a stranger in those parts himself. So when the parachutist tries to pass it off by saying, "Yes, it's down that road," he'll be suspected at once. The other man will report him when he reaches the next village and within a bare couple of hours the village constable will puff up on a bike and ask him, "Now, now, what's all this here? . . ."

4. The parachutist who lands in uniform, armed to the ears with sub-machine guns, bicycles, overalls, pistols, Verey lights, catherine wheels, iron rations, explosives and also, if he survives the landing (which seems doubtful), makes his way to the nearest lonely cottage, knocks on the door and asks for a drink. Well, so much arises out of that that I'd better leave it till my next article—PARACHUTISTS AND WHETHER TO TREAT THEM. A. A.

o o

## The Dear Poppingtons

OF course you must know this house quite well."

"Oh, very, very well. From attic to cellar. I can't tell you how well I know it. I was always in and out when the Poppingtons lived here."

"I hope you won't think we've spoilt it. We like the house so much."

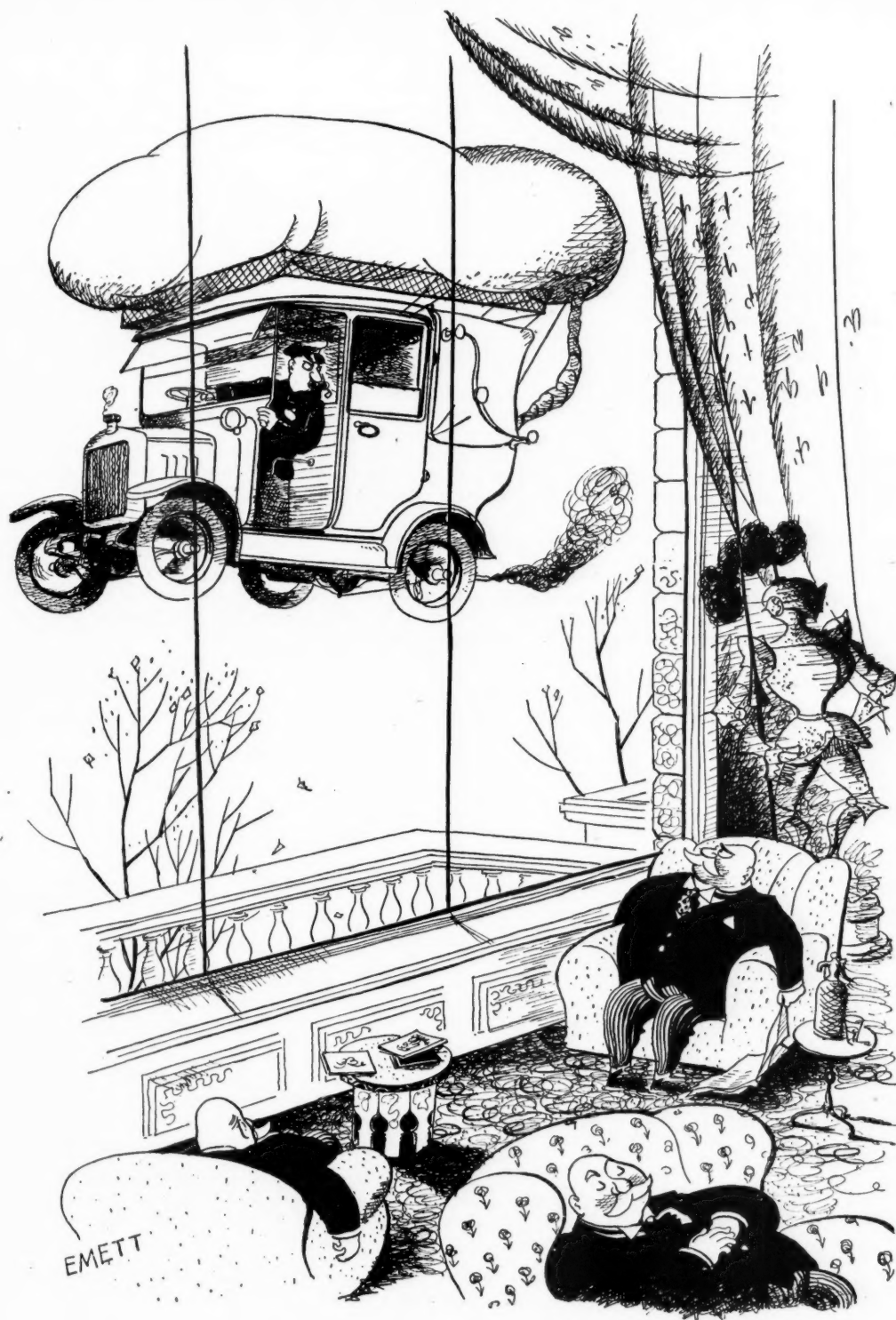
"The Poppingtons were wild about it. They adored it. They thought there was nowhere like it. What they did in the garden!"

"I can see it's been beautifully planned."

"I can't tell you what it was like when the Poppingtons were here. I always used to call it a blaze of colour."

"Well, of course, it's rather late in the year now—"

"Ah, that made no difference to



*"Taxi?"*



Lydia Poppington. She simply made that garden. I see you've cut down the dear old laurel bushes by the gate."

"We thought the ground rather wanted clearing."

"The Poppingtons found a wilderness when they first came. They cleared away what they didn't want and left what they did want."

"As a matter of fact we worked on that system."

"Colonel Poppington had what I call an eye."

"Only one?"

"Ha-ha. I always say that a sense of humour is such an asset. Now, I don't think I've ever known anyone as amusing as Lydia Poppington's half-sister—her name was Block. Josephine Block. Miss Josephine Block. She was so often here in the old days."

"Won't you sit down?"

"The Poppingtons always made this room so comfortable. Wonderful arm-chairs. And in the library too. How is the dear old library?"

"Not very tidy, I'm afraid, at the moment. My daughters use it a good deal."

"The Poppington children were all boys."

"I thought there were only two children?"

"That's what I said. All boys. No girls at all."

"We've got one son, you know. He's at school."

"Lydia Poppington wanted to send their boys to Eton, but the Colonel said 'No. No,' he said. 'Eton is all very well in its way, but it's an awkward journey to get there. So it had better be St. Hodge.' No change, you see. They could get straight through. You may wonder why they didn't go by car—they had two cars, a large one and a small one—but they were in such constant use that they couldn't ever really count upon being able to use them."

"How very curious! Don't let my cat worry you—or perhaps you like cats?"

"I don't dislike cats. In the old days this house was full of bull-terriers. Quite full of them. The Poppingtons bred bull-terriers. She was wonderful with them. But then she was a very clever woman. Brilliant. And the children were brilliant too. One might really say that each of them was a genius in quite a different way. Most people thought that Colonel Poppington ought to have been made Commander-in-Chief in this war."

"Really."

"His portrait, in his Yeomanry uniform, used to hang in the dining-room in the old days. What does the poor old dining-room look like now?"

"Would you care to have a look at it?"

"I don't think so, thank you. I prefer to remember it as it used to be."

"We've made a very nice shelter in the cellars. Just in case, you know."

"The Poppingtons always used the cellar for their wine. Never for anything else. Miss Block—Mrs. Poppington's sister—the one I told you about—her name was Josephine Block—she was so amusing—she always said that if she had to be bombed she'd rather be bombed in her bed. She always slept in the room with the balcony. I dare say it looks very different now."

"Well, the balcony's still there."

"And what's happened to that lovely gallery at the top of the stairs, I wonder? Lydia Poppington had a really beautiful Persian rug there. It looked so right. She was wonderful at interior decorating."

"Was she? It really seems a pity they ever left this place when they were so fond of it."

"Oh, yes, yes. The whole neighbourhood is in mourning practically. Things will never be the same again. We all feel that."

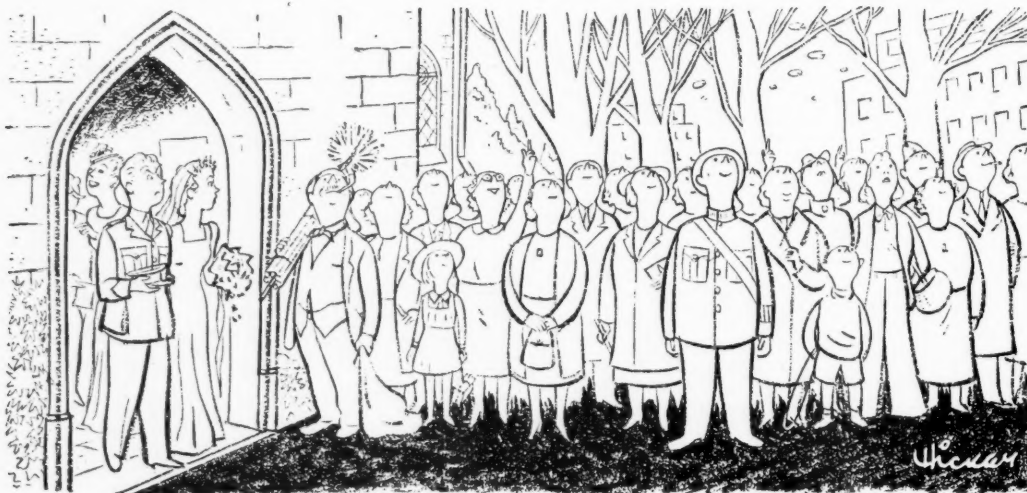
"I'm afraid we shan't be very popular, in that case."

"Don't say that! I'm sure everyone is anxious to give you a welcome."

"Are you? I should so like to know what makes you think so."

"Why, because the dear Poppingtons—the most generous people in the world, I always say—begged everyone before they left to try to make the best of it all. So like them!"

E. M. D.



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